CBS Radio News
transcribed from tape

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(In taping, first few words missed.)

.... CBS News White House correspondent Robert Pierpoint has uncovered a new development in the case.

Pierpoint: Some time during that difficult day of August 8th President Nixon signed two almost identical letters, barring public access to certain of his papers until 1985. If he had not signed the letters he would have lost control, the moment he ceased to be President, of documents dating from his years in the Vice Presidency, and including the political campaigns of 1960, '64 and '68.

The documents in question are the gifts of notes, tapes, letters and other papers which Mr. Nixon presented to the National Archives as a gift to the nation in 1968 and '69. It was the '69 gift which was eventually disallowed by the Internal Revenue Service and caused President Nixon a serious tax problem. Part of the reason for the disallowal was the restrictions placed on the so-called public gift, restrictions the President extended in one of his final acts last Thursday [8 Aug].

Some government officials point out that all Presidents put restrictions on documents they donate to the public, for diplomatic and other reasons. Nevertheless, the Justice Department, faced with lawsuits over access to those papers, is now studying whether Mr. Nixon can keep those gifts to the public from the public.

Robert Pierpoint, CBS News, Washington.